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FUNDAMENTAL FEATURES OF ONE-SIDED FREE TRADE, AS APPLIED TO THE COLONIES:

WITH HINTS HOW TO ESCAPE THE FETTERS OF BRITISH POLICY BY MEANS OF
A FEDERAL UNION OF THE PROVINCES:

IN CONNECTION WITH THE
HALIFAX AND QUEBEC RAILWAY.

BY A COLONIST.

If any doubts hitherto existed in the minds of the people of British North America as to the *tendency* and *ultimate object* to be gained by the Colonial policy hereafter to be pursued by the Government of Great Britain towards these Colonies, Lord John Russell's Speech in the House of Commons on the 5th of February last, ought to be considered conclusive on this head.

The Speech of the noble Premier, taken in connection with a certain Despatch addressed to the Government of New Brunswick by the Colonial Office, *forbidding* to give Bounties for the encouragement of the Fisheries, augurs anything but a *fostering* care on the part of the United Kingdom towards the (so-called) *British North American Provinces*.

The time has arrived, however, when the people inhabiting those Provinces must act for themselves; and it is an encouraging and gratifying omen that such a man as the Hon. H. H. Cogswell, of Halifax, has taken the lead in the emancipation of those Colonies from the "*hob-nail*" policy, which the present Government of Great Britain are attempting to *rivet* upon the enterprise of the Colonies, under the specious but flimsy guise of free trade.

Let Mr. Cogswell persevere, and these Colonies will some day testify that they owe him a debt of gratitude, which will grow as these Provinces will increase in prosperity, and the name of "Cogswell" will contrast favorably with those who have attained place, power and pelf, by pleading popular institutions, whilst all the influence of their acquired station, by these means, is *now* thrown into the scale of unmitigated Free Trade, having for its object the aggrandisement of manufacturing capitalists of Great Britain, and the entire paralysis of Colonial enterprise to attain that end.

The *fact*, as reported by the Halifax Press, that the Hon. Provincial Secretary of Nova Scotia has given notice of a Resolution which he intends to submit, to authorize the Government to issue debentures payable in twenty years, at four per cent., to build a Railway from Halifax to Windsor, is sufficient proof of his disposition to fetter and thwart the *practical* scheme propounded by Mr. Cogswell to develop the natural resources of these Provinces. The course which he has thus adopted, no doubt meets the concurrence of his colleagues, (as he is considered the Prime Minister of that Colony) and the approbation of the Colonial Office; yet, if the people of the British Provinces are true to themselves, they will soon teach this *free-trade alliance* between mock Responsible Government and Downing-street domination, that they are neither to be

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amused with *kite-flying* on this side of the Atlantic, as in time gone by, nor intimidated from asserting what they conceive indispensable to their prosperity, even were they distasteful to the Colonial Office.

Let the people ponder this startling fact: that the *fundamental feature* of the free-trade Colonial policy, as expounded by Lord John Russell and endorsed by the Colonial Government of Nova Scotia, is based upon *fostering and extending British interests at the expense of the Colonies*. Lord John says: "The whole result of what I have to say, is, in the first place, that whatever discontents do prevail—and in some Colonies complaints do prevail, which, it must be owned, are well founded—in respect to the transition, to them, perchance, a painful transition from a system of monopoly (as regards the Colonies) to a system of free trade, we ought not to go back, in any respect from the principles of free trade, but to impress upon the Colonies that we are at liberty to obtain productions from other countries, which may produce them better and cheaper than these Colonies; and that the Colonies, on the other hand, will be at liberty to trade with all parts of the world in the manner that appears to them most advantageous, and that, in future, will be a *cardinal point in our policy* (loud cheers)."—Again, his Lordship says: "As regards the North American Colonies, it is our wish to give full scope to the will of the people of those Colonies,—to enable them to work their way to their own prosperity better than by means of *ordinances* from this country."

It is to be presumed, that his Lordship was not aware that while he was preparing the free-trade speech which he was then delivering, interlarded with so many constitutional *intensions*, his compeer, Earl Grey, or Mr. Hawes of the Colonial-office, was dictating an "ordinance" circumscribing the rights of the people of New Brunswick, as to the mode best calculated to keep that Colony in a dependant state, by forbidding the exercise of their own discretion to foster their Fisheries, which, next to agricultural pursuits, is now their anchor of hope to save them from the "*foaming breakers*" of penury, which British legislation has planted around them. But his Lordship *was* aware of ordinances which still have full force—which prevent the North American Colonies "from giving full scope to the will of the people, to enable them to work their own prosperity." Had his Lordship stated the actual state of things as they exist with respect to one of those Colonies (Nova Scotia), he should have said: "ordinances" from this country (England) *do* seal up to monopolists in this metropolis (London) the vast mineral resources of that Colony for sixty years; and in 1846, my noble friend, Earl Grey, and myself, legalized that monopoly, as far as the authority of the Crown could give the appearance of legality to that transaction, by granting a Royal charter to a party whose office is at 52, Old Broad-street, and my official knowledge of the Firm is such as to warrant me in stating that the Royal prerogative was *judiciously* exercised towards an important interest of this great

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country. Although I do not know personally the Directors of the General Mining Association, yet, I know that they are greatly interested in the *metal* trade of this country, and that the "operatives" in the various counties, in *their* employ, tell well at contested elections in support of Her Majesty's Government and free trade. So long, therefore, as that charter shall have effect, there is but little chance of that poor Colony working their way to such prosperity as will materially interfere with the *iron* trade of this country, or that they will manufacture any fabrics that will be deemed of any importance by the constituency of my friend from Manchester, whose "unadorned eloquence" will proclaim the blessings of one-sided free trade, which locks up the elements of wealth in one portion of the empire, to enable manufacturers of Lancashire and Staffordshire to meet no competition from British capital employed in the Colonies. His Lordship, who is fond of displaying the statistical prosperity of the Colonies, might have stated to the British Parliament, the entire success of the ordinance and charter in question. He might have stated that an official return from the United States had been published in the London press on the 26th of January last, showing the imports of coal to that country, for the year ending the 30th June, 1849, by which it appears that from England and Scotland there was but 64,543 tons, whilst from the British North American Colonies there was 131,565 tons, and which, he had reason to believe, sold at the pit's mouth, in Nova Scotia, for ten shillings sterling, per ton: thus commanding an export of £65,782 10s. sterling, to a foreign country, besides an extensive home consumption, which must leave a nett profit of six shillings per ton, equal to £39,969 10s. sterling, and if one-fourth be added, as the probable *profits* on home consumption, the very handsome sum of £49,962 5s. sterling, is derived annually by this country (England) from a poor and distant Colony, and added to the already immense capital of this country, and this without any risk of the Colony attempting to manufacture a "hob-nail," so long as the price of coal is secured by charter, which (by his Lordship's own act) *was intended* to have effect for upwards of thirty-six years yet to expire.

His Lordship might further add: "that the Bluenoses (for such is the cognomen which distinguishes the Novascotians from the savages) have yet to learn that it is the *profits* of a trade that enrich a country, and he had reason to believe that the working of Responsible Government, by the present advisers of Her Majesty's able Representative in that Colony, *would make the inhabitants content with a mere subsistence*. Four shillings per ton, for cost of production and Royalty, was an ample allowance per ton, leaving the sum of six shillings sterling per ton profit, as already stated. Suppose the coal trade of Nova Scotia (continued his Lordship) to remain stationary for the unexpired term of the lease and charter, thirty-six years; and suppose another case (not at all impossible, if Captain Harness shall have the power which he now wields) *that the population of that Colony will not materially increase, yet*

this great country will draw from that Colony, before the expiration of the charter, a sum not less than £1,800,000 sterling, and the country will *then* be just as good a "breakwater" against American rivalry (the only purpose for which we want to hold it) as it *now* is: "giving useful shelter to our commerce in times of peace, and necessary refuge in times of war": with this advantage, that countries which cannot manufacture "hob-nails" are easily governed.

His Lordship, in conclusion, would just state, that he felt no apprehension that this "cardinal point in their policy" would be disturbed by the Colonial Government, whatever changes might take place in respect to individuals in office, and the opinions they might express as to benefits conferred upon the Colony by the introduction of Responsible Government and Free Trade. One thing he was authorized to state, that whatever party was in power, the "Firm" whose office was at 52, Old Broad-street, would not be damaged. Whether Mr. Johnston or Mr. Uniacke was Attorney-General, or whether Mr. Howe or Mr. Almon was Provincial Secretary, were matters of no consequence to the "General Mining Association." The former were *both* the standing Solicitors of the Company; and, as for the present Provincial Secretary, some sixteen years ago, while he was driving piles to build his present official habitation upon, he lent the use of his engine (the press) to consolidate the claims of Rundell, Bridge and Rundell to the ground which the General Mining Association now occupy as monopolists, and assignees of the late Duke of York's creditors. Mr. Almon was bound, under the principles of free trade, to award them his countenance (he would not say protection: that was an obsolete expression), under the consideration of *losing his per centage* upon the goods given in lieu of money, for wages, at the "Albion Mines."

Here, then, are *features and facts* deserving attention from the people inhabiting the British North American Colonies, as they are deeply connected with the prosperity of the country, and the spurious free trade and sham responsibility forced upon the Colonies. But the very natural question will, no doubt, be asked: If the Imperial Government—the manufacturing capitalists of England—and the Colonial Governments are leagued together to hold the vast mineral resources of these Colonies in abeyance, to forward the interests of a grinding monopoly, how are the people of these Colonies to obtain their rights, when opposed by such powerful influences? The answer to this important inquiry has been given by Lord John Russell in the very speech upon which we are now animadverting. The noble Premier seemed anxious to impress the House with the belief, that the principles of free trade sought to invest the Colonies with every immunity they could enjoy as subjects of Great Britain living within the United Kingdom. To establish this *debatable* position, the Premier quotes from the charter granted by Charles II. in 1672, to the Earl of Carlisle, to settle Barbadoes, which ordains "that every subject of ours brought within the said Province, with all their

children born there, and being subjects of ours, shall be as free as if they were in England, and possess all the privileges, rights, liberties, and franchises of this kingdom, and as liege people of this realm." Again: "In the case of Granada, which was ceded in 1752, the King having issued a proclamation, in which he said that there should be a Council and Assembly in the Island, to make laws and levy taxes, it was questioned whether he had a right to tax. And it was declared by Lord Mansfield, that whatever right he had at the conquest of the Colony, having by proclamation granted the privileges of the English Constitution, *it was out of his power to establish arbitrary taxation.*"

Let Lord John apply this sound constitutional principle to the case of Nova Scotia and its mineral deposits, and what will become of the Duke of York's Lease and the Charter granted by himself, in 1846, to the General Mining Association, whose title is derived from said lease. Does not the Noble Premier know, that on the 11th January, 1759, that Charles Lawrence, Esquire, then Governor of Nova Scotia, issued a Proclamation, inviting emigrants to settle on the vacant lands in that Province. That the said Proclamation contains *no reserves whatever* to the Crown for lands thereafter to be granted, except "a quit rent of one shilling sterling for every fifty acres; such quit rent to be paid at the expiration of ten years from the date of each grant." Lord Mansfield has declared, that whatever right the Crown had at the conquest of the Colony, having, by Proclamation, granted the rights, *it was out of his power to establish arbitrary conditions.* The Crown had no right or power, posterior to Governor Lawrence's Proclamation, to make any reserves whatever except the quit rent therein specified. Haliburton, the Provincial historian, and now one of the Judges of the Colony, has styled this Proclamation "*The Charter of Nova Scotia.*"

Let Novascotians answer the call made by the Honorable H. Cogswell to start the Halifax and Quebec Railway in a spirit worthy of the undertaking. Let them meet, deliberate, take stock, and nominate Mr. Cogswell and four other gentlemen, and ask the Lieutenant Governor to appoint them Commissioners to negotiate such preliminaries as may be deemed necessary with the Imperial Government, the Provinces of New Brunswick and Canada, and Capitalists in England, to prosecute this national enterprise to a speedy conclusion, in conformity to the provisions of the Act passed last Session for that purpose. The Commissioners, thus properly clothed with the necessary authority, would go into the English market to sell stock and borrow money, with the resolution of the Legislature pledging the Revenue to the extent of £20,000 sterling annually for the interest of £500,000, *which amount should be taken in Railway stock*, an equal amount would soon be raised on Mr. Cogswell's scheme upon the Crown Lands in the

Counties of Halifax, Hants, Colchester, and Cumberland, more especially when it is known in London, on the authority of Lord John Russell, that the mines and minerals of Nova Scotia are not vested in the Crown, nor in the General Mining Association, but belong to the inhabitants who are now, or hereafter may be, proprietors of the soil. But in order to accomplish this, the people must take the initiation of "ways and means" to obtain the end; they must not trust to the officials of the Colonial governments, who are in the leading strings of the Colonial office, and managed by such *disinterested* and *clearsighted* engineer as the President of the Railway Commissioners of White Hall. From indications which passing events too plainly record to be misunderstood, the day is not distant when British North America will form a Federal Union of the Provinces. Their first act should be, to take measures to connect the shores of Lake Superior with Halifax harbour, thus securing to the farmers of Canada the markets of these Lower Provinces and England, who require their surplus produce, debarred as they now are from the American market, by high duties on the one side, and from their legitimate markets on the other, by physical barriers for six months in each year, which naught but a railway can remove, and to them this would be a great boon. Manufactures would follow, villages would rise which would create a ready market for the farmers here: St. John and Halifax would soon vie with Boston and New York, and would require all our surplus agricultural produce in *fresh* meat and vegetables—Canada would supply bread and salted provisions, we, in return, would send them hardware and fish in abundance. In short, of this we may rest assured, that "the *united Provinces of British America*" possess elements of national greatness not surpassed by any portion of the British dominions. With sufficient reliance upon our own resources, we can not only complete the Halifax and Quebec Railway in five or six years, but lay the basis of future prosperity on that undertaking, which will realize more favourable results than any anticipation however sanguine.

Since writing the foregoing remarks, I have been reading the speech of the Hon. Mather Byle Almon, of Halifax, who, it seems, in this instance, leads in the Legislative Council the principles of free trade with the United States. The Honorable gentleman seizes upon the occasion to uncork some of his geological and mineral knowledge of the wealth of Nova Scotia, as a prelude to the apparent object he had in view. But we must let him speak as he is reported:—"Within twelve miles of the coal at Pictou, which lies in a stratum of 36 feet in depth, is a layer of iron (at McLelland's mountain), said to measure sixteen feet in thickness; yet the iron required for the mining operation is imported, being conveyed a distance of 3000 miles. It is brought in the rude state, and is smelted on

the very ground where the iron exists in abundance. Why is this? The company who work the coal mines have already expended on these from £400,000 to £500,000 in the Province, and that has not been found sufficient."

It is an old saying, that those who *fabricate* wondrous tales, and relate them, should have good memories. I will not charge the Hon. Mather Byle Almon with stating what he may not possibly know to be untrue; but I will state *facts and figures* too plain to be disputed, and which may probably assist him from falling into a similar error on a future occasion. The whole capital of the General Mining Association is limited, both by the Deed of the Association and the Royal Charter, to £400,000 sterling!!! Can the Hon. Gentleman plead ignorance of that fact? Will the Hon. Councillor, then, explain to the people of Nova Scotia how it happens that the shares of the General Mining Association are now quoted in the Mining Journal of London at £13 per share, if they have expended from £400,000 to £500,000, when their capital is limited to £400,000, more especially when a few years ago (when they had the chancery suit on hand) the shares were selling from £3 to £5 per share. Since the Hon. Gentleman has volunteered to give the country information as to the *expenditure* of this Company, perhaps he might condescend to answer the following questions, having some bearing upon their *receipts*:—What are their dividends, and how declared? How often do they hold general meetings of the shareholders, and submit an account of profits and loss? How happens it that a general meeting of the shareholders had not been held since 1842, until June, 1849, if their affairs were in such an unpropitious state as alleged by him? And why *refuse* the Reporter of the London Mining Journal, or any other representative of the London Press, admission to the meeting held in June last? If their operations are legitimate, why have recourse to secrecy? Let Mr. Almon rest assured, that the *finesse* of parading *expenditures*, without the offset of *receipts*, will no longer deter colonists from a searching investigation, or scare them from undertaking mining operations commensurate with their means and prospects of success. If the statement already made be correct, that 131,565 tons of coals were exported to the United States for the year ending the 30th of June, (and the return is an official one from the Custom House Books of America), then that Company must have pocketed (of which the Hon. Mather Byle Almon is said to be one) the sum of 197,330 dollars from the *exports*; and if one-fourth be added for the quantity consumed at home, the amount would be 246,681 dollars!! Great as this sum is, to a poor country like Nova Scotia, to contribute yearly to the *millionaires* of 52, Old Broad-street, yet the sum is but a *trifle* when compared to the injury inflicted upon the country, when the price they charge for coal is such that no manufacture can be started with any prospect of suc-

cess. Will the people submit to such imposition with passive indifference? If they will, let them cease to consider themselves English, or worthy of the privileges which Lord John Russell declares pertains to them as British subjects, and which, he says, is a cardinal point in his colonial policy—take him at his word. Start the Railway, and before the first mile is laid, the lease and charter of the monopoly will be as defunct as the Corn Laws and Navigations Acts. In conclusion, the opinion given by the English Railway commissioners, as expressed by Captain Harness, “that the Halifax and Quebec Railway, as a commercial speculation, would be an imprudent undertaking, partakes strongly of the desire too generally diffused among interested manufacturers in England, to keep those Colonies as a mere “breakwater” (to use the significant phraseology of the *London Times*) to repel the annexing propensity of their most formidable rival, must be repudiated by every enlightened mind who has investigated the splendid elements of sustentation which the country offers to this grand and now indispensable undertaking.

After the most searching and impartial investigation, the writer is convinced, that in less than ten years after its completion it will pay handsome dividends, and in less than half a century, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick will occupy, in North America, a similar position to what Great Britain now does in Europe, with respect to manufactures of hardware and cutlery. Let New Brunswick and Canada produce *their Cogswells*, respectively, with competent colleagues as commissioners, and such an amount of British capital and skill will be infused into the Provinces as no other project could induce across the Atlantic. This is what is wanted to give confidence in England, and you will soon have men to visit the country who understand and can estimate the value of the resources which the country offers to investments. One success will lead to another, and the country would soon be relieved from the sneers and taunts of interested parties who magnify the difficulties of mining operations in the Colonies, to deter the inhabitants from tasting the sweets they now enjoy unmolested by competition, by continual deference to *one* side of the ledger, which record the *expenditure* of twenty-four years without deigning to give the remotest hint of the *receipts* on the *other* side.

Once for all, let the Colonies call to mind the united “*Bundle of Sticks*.” The Railway is the girdle that will bind together two millions of *British subjects*, animated with the example of the stock from which they spring, who despise to ask as a *favour* what they believe belongs to them as a matter of *right*,—acting upon the impulse which inspire those who adopt as their motto—“Those who would be free, themselves must strike the blow.”

March, 1850.